

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 674

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the congregation of
Glen Leven Presbyterian Church upon their
120th Anniversary.

WHEREAS, the churches of our nation have been an integral part of our history as a people and have had an unparalleled impact in forming and maintaining a stable and just society; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Glen Leven Presbyterian Church of Nashville, the members of which are celebrating the church's 120th anniversary; and

WHEREAS, established in 1889, Glen Leven Presbyterian Church traces its lineage back to Moore Memorial Church, which appointed various committees to explore the city and suburbs of Nashville at that time in an effort to establish a new church; and

WHEREAS, settling on the Waverly Place neighborhood, the founding group established an evening Sabbath-school at an unfurnished dwelling rented from Mr. W. S. Criddle, a real estate developer. The immediate success of the school led to the eventual purchase of a lot by Mr. John Thompson and his wife from Mr. Criddle for \$1,728 in the fall of 1890; purchased for the construction of a church, the lot was located on the southeast corner of Forrest (Elliott) Avenue and Central (Douglas) Avenue; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 1890, the Presbytery of Nashville organized the new church, named Glen Leven, which consisted of twenty-eight members with four elders and two deacons elected. Construction began in July 1890, with half of the reported total cost of \$10,000 donated by Colonel and Mrs. John Overton, who would be major benefactors of the church throughout their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, the name "Glen Leven" was reportedly selected because of the interest and financial support of Mrs. Mary Thompson and Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson, whose home bore that name; and

WHEREAS, Glen Leven Church was officially dedicated on April 5, 1891, in a splendid service that opened to the public a beautiful building which could seat a capacity crowd of three hundred and seventy-five persons. In 1894, the deed to the property was given as a gift to Glen Leven by Mr. and Mrs. Thompson; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James H. McNeilly, formerly of Moore Memorial Church, was called as the first pastor of Glen Leven and Miss Emma Waldkirch was the first person to be enrolled as a member of the church after the charter was granted; she taught a class of children in the Sunday school and her brother, Oscar Waldkirch, was Secretary of the Sunday School for many years; and

WHEREAS, in 1902, the beautiful stained-glass Memorial Window was installed after being donated to the church by Mr. Jesse Overton in memory of his parents, Colonel and Mrs. John Overton, and his brother Mr. Robert Overton. The window, made by Tiffany, had been displayed at the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo, New York, in 1901, according to church historians; and

WHEREAS, Reverend McNeilly, who had been a Chaplain in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States, would serve as pastor until 1910, leading the ever-growing congregation for two decades; and

WHEREAS, on October 16, 1910, Dr. W. C. Alexander became pastor, in which capacity he served until 1936. During his tenure, Glen Leven would see growth, both in membership and facilities; Cottage Presbyterian Church merged with Glen Leven in 1922, a two-story Sunday School wing was added in 1920, and the Austin pipe organ was installed in 1930; and

WHEREAS, in 1937, Glen Leven installed the Reverend John B. Bittinger as minister, under whose leadership the church began holding evening services and mid-week prayer meetings. Reverend Bittinger also led the congregation in working with the enlisted men of the United States Army Air Corps serving at the air classification center on Thompson Lane, which work continued after he received a commission as a Chaplain in the Navy and resigned from Glen Leven in 1943; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Glen Leven's next pastor, Dr. Otis L. Graham, the church received a number of improvements and renovations, including new paint and plaster, a new furnace and heating system, new wainscoting in the sanctuary, new carpet, and cushions for the pews; and

WHEREAS, the arrival of Pastor Edwin W. Albright in 1950 would see the church expand its mission into education, establishing a weekday kindergarten program with Mrs. Victor Glass as director. It was the first day school established in Nashville and, by 1951, approximately thirty-five children were enrolled for classes; and

WHEREAS, during the 1950s, Glen Leven Church again enjoyed updates, adding air conditioning and remodeling the facilities, until it was decided that a new building at a new site should be obtained. Property on which to build a new church was purchased on Franklin Road just north of the old John Thompson home, Glen Leven, that gave the church its name; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone for the new Glen Leven Presbyterian Church was laid on November 22, 1962 and the congregation, now numbering over 640, held its first Sunday service in the new building on March 17, 1963, led by new pastor the Reverend Harry S. Topham; and

WHEREAS, throughout its distinguished history, Glen Leven has been blessed with the services of devout pastors whose stalwart leadership and dedication to their parishioners have shaped the direction and ministries of the Church, evidenced today by the wide array of activities and missions ongoing at Glen Leven; and

WHEREAS, today, Glen Leven Presbyterian Church serves its community and beyond through its various ministries, including the Prayer Ministry, the Good Samaritan Ministry, and the Mexico mission outreach and its support of such programs as the Hope Clinic for Women,

the Martha O'Bryan Center, the Monroe Harding Home, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, Second Harvest Food Bank, and the Nashville Rescue Mission, and

WHEREAS, currently the congregation of Glen Leven Presbyterian Church is led by Dr. Mark S. Bryan, who has demonstrated the utmost ability, integrity, and Christian belief, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his congregation and colleagues alike; and

WHEREAS, since its humble beginnings, the Church leaders and congregation at Glen Leven Presbyterian Church, following the guidance of the Lord, have faithfully striven to carry out God's work in the world and continue in their mission and Christian endeavors; and

WHEREAS, as a powerful tool in the service of the Kingdom of God, Glen Leven Presbyterian Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and Nation, and the members of this exceptional and historic congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of their community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join in celebrating the 120th anniversary of Glen Leven Presbyterian Church, thank the good people of this congregation and their ministers for their notable service to the Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.